

H1N1 AKA SWINE FLU

A FACT SHEET

GENERAL
PUBLIC

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT H1N1 AND VACCINATION

1. What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

Are they different from seasonal flu?

Symptoms of seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu virus are similar. They can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. However, people infected with H1N1 flu may also have diarrhea and vomiting, especially children.

2. What are the risks if I get H1N1?

Most of the time the H1N1 flu sickens people for three to five days; however, as with seasonal flu, some people have gotten very sick and a small percentage have died from it.

3. If I'm "high risk," am I more likely to get H1N1 or have more severe symptoms?

The H1N1 virus is expected to infect many more people than the seasonal flu virus because it is a new strain of flu virus. You are not more likely than others to get H1N1, but people with certain medical conditions may be at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

4. What is the difference between the nasal mist and the shot?

The 2009 H1N1 "flu shot" is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people, people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.

The 2009 H1N1 nasal-spray vaccine is made with live, weakened viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for "live attenuated influenza vaccine"). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 2 to 49 years of age who are not pregnant. A live weakened virus will NOT make you or others around you sick. The amount given is just enough for you to build an immunity to the virus.

5. Is the H1N1 vaccine safe?

Yes. Both the 2009 H1N1 flu shot and the 2009 H1N1 nasal-spray flu vaccine are made just like seasonal flu vaccines. Studies have shown that they are as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines.

6. What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Will it give me the flu?

The flu shot: The viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that may occur are soreness, redness, or swelling where the injection was given, low-grade fever, and muscle aches.

The nasal spray: The viruses in the nasal-spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness.

- *In children*, side effects from the nasal-spray vaccine can include runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, muscle aches and fever.
- *In adults*, side effects from the nasal-spray vaccine can include runny nose, headache, sore throat and cough.

If side effects occur, they begin soon after the shot, are usually mild, and usually last one to two days. However, almost all people who receive flu vaccine have no serious problems from it. On rare occasions, flu vaccination can cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions.

7. Can I get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine at the same time?

You can get the H1N1 vaccine shot at the same time as any other vaccine, but it should be given in a different site (e.g., one shot in the left arm, the other in the right arm). You CANNOT receive the H1N1 nasal spray at the same time as the seasonal vaccine in nasal-spray form. You can, however, receive other vaccines at the same time as the nasal spray.

8. How many doses of H1N1 vaccine do I need?

People age 10 and older only require one dose of vaccine. Those younger than 10 will require two doses, given four weeks apart.

9. If I just get one vaccine (seasonal or H1N1) do I get any protection against the other flu?

No. However, in the future this may be possible.

10. Should pregnant women be vaccinated?

Yes. They should get the flu shot (not the nasal-spray vaccination). To date, there is no evidence that any component of the H1N1 vaccine is harmful to the fetus or the mother, and vaccination is our best tool for preventing influenza. Pregnant women are one of the most at-risk groups, especially for complications and hospitalization due to the flu.

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THE MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT H1N1 AND VACCINATION

MYTH 1. I'm healthy so I don't need to worry about the H1N1 flu.

FALSE. H1N1 flu, like seasonal flu, can infect anyone and is actually more likely to infect teens and young adults than the seasonal flu.

MYTH 2. The H1N1 flu vaccine will give me the flu.

FALSE. The low-grade fever that some people experience after they've been inoculated is not a symptom of the flu, but a symptom of a healthy immune system fighting off an insult that has been introduced into the body to strengthen the immune system.

MYTH 3. Vaccines are dangerous. It's better to expose my child to the virus so she can build a natural immunity to it.

FALSE. If you expose your child to the virus, your child will actually get the disease. This is not recommended and can be dangerous. The vaccine is made the same way and by the same manufacturer as the seasonal flu vaccine, which has been proven to be safe and effective.

MYTH 4. Only those at high risk should get the flu vaccine.

FALSE. When the vaccine is available to the general public, everyone should get vaccinated to protect themselves and others by not spreading the flu. It is true that a few people should not be vaccinated: if you are allergic to eggs, have a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome or have had a severe reaction to a previous flu shot. Also, infants younger than 6 months old should not get this vaccine.

MYTH 5. Vaccinating my child could cause autism.

FALSE. Multiple studies have examined the relationship between thimerosal (a preservative) and autism, all of which have not demonstrated any relationship. Preservative-free vaccines may be available for small children and pregnant women.

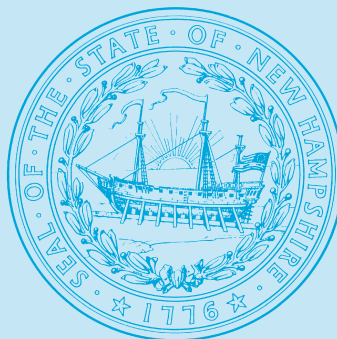
MYTH 6. The H1N1 vaccine is untested and was rushed to market.

FALSE. The H1N1 vaccine was tested in the same manner and manufactured in the same facilities as the seasonal flu vaccine using the same procedure.

New Hampshire has an H1N1 vaccine distribution plan.

When vaccine is available, the state of New Hampshire will announce when and where clinics will be held.

To find a public clinic near you, call New Hampshire's H1N1 Public Inquiry Line by dialing **211**.



To learn more about the H1N1 flu and vaccine, go to the H1N1 Influenza Resource Center on <http://www.nh.gov>
NH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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